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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 004414

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/ARPI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/18/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [KU](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: GOK READY TO WORK WITH PALESTINIANS ONCE ABU MAZEN
ELECTED PRESIDENT

REF: A. KUWAIT 4369

[B](#). KUWAIT 4312

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

[1](#)1. (C) During a December 18 meeting on another topic, Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Shaykh Dr. Mohammed Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah told Ambassador LeBaron and British Ambassador Christopher Wilton that the December 13 visit to Kuwait of Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) "went very well." Dr. Mohammed added that Abu Mazen "said all the right things" and delivered a three-pronged message to the GOK: the Palestinian people are in dire need of assistance, the Palestinian Authority (PA) would like to re-establish diplomatic relations with Kuwait and open an embassy, and Palestinians workers would like to come back to Kuwait.

[1](#)2. (C) Dr. Mohammed said the GOK fully supports Abu Mazen as a presidential candidate and new financial flows will depend on him being the next Palestinian president. Thus any funding or discussion of upgrading relations will be after the Palestinian elections. The FM shared that Abu Mazen is confident he will win the January election. The FM reported that many Kuwaitis, particularly some Members of Parliament, want more assurances from the Palestinians before moving forward on any of these points. The return of Palestinians remains a very sensitive issue, according to the FM, and the FM made it clear that the return of large numbers was not going to happen.

[1](#)3. (C) The British Ambassador asked if the GOK made a specific pledge of financial support during the visit and Ambassador inquired whether contributions pledged at the 2002 Arab Summit in Beirut would serve as a guide. (Note: We understand the GOK has pledged at least USD 100 million to the PA. End Note.) Dr. Mohammed avoided assigning a value to GOK assistance but said that Kuwait had indeed made a pledge at Beirut but declined disburse funds to former PA Chairman Arafat due to rampant corruption. The GOK wants to ensure that any financial assistance will reach the desired Palestinian recipients before committing to re-opening the spigot. He said that they were encouraged by the performance of Salam Fayyad in managing PA finances.

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LEBARON